THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN) : (a) to (d) Sir, Service Tax on all Telecom Service including the prepaid card sold by private Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS) Licensees is as per the rate fixed by the Union Government and not by TRAI. The Service Tax on Telecom Service which was earlier 5% has been increased to 8% by the Finance Bill of 2003. As intimated by Cellular Operators Association of India on behalf of CMTS Operators, they are levying the same prescribed Service Tax for prepaid cards.

Food Subsidy to FCI

2600. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) the amount of food subsidy given by Government during the last two years, year-wise;

(b) in what manner the subsidy has been utilised by the Food Corporation of India; and

(c) the amount of foodgrains lost in transit during the period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) The amount of food subsidy released by the Government of India to the Food Corporation of India (FCI) as well as to the various State Governments for undertaking Decentralised Procurement Scheme during the last two years are as under:—

(Rs. in crore)

Year	FCI	States	Amount
2001-02	16724.00	770.00	17494.00
2002-03	22673.72	1502.73	24176.45

(b) During the years 2001-02 and 2002-03, the subsidy has been utilized by the Food Corporation of India as under :—

(Rs. in crore)

Year	Consumer Subsidy	Buffer Subsidy	Total
2001-02	10842.10	5881.90	16724.00
2002-03	16700.62	5973.10	22673.72

(c) The value of transit loss for the years 2001-02 and 2002-03 are as under :—

(Rs. in crore)

Year	Amount
2001-02 (Provisional)	118.33
2002-03 (Provisional)	108.29

Creation of sugar buffer stock

2601. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to create a buffer stock of sugar;

(b) if so, the quantity of sugar in the proposed stock of sugar; and

(c) the estimate of sugar production in this year's ending *i.e.* September, 2003 and what was the sugar production last year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) and (b) Government have already created a buffer stock of 20 lakh tonnes of sugar for a period of one year from 18.12.2002 to 17.12.2003.

(c) The production of sugar in the sugar season 2002-03 (October-September) is provisionally estimated at about 200 lakh tonnes. The production of sugar in the sugar season 2001-02 was 185.25 lakh tonnes (Provisional).